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THE TIMES BUILDING,
SOUTHWEST CORNER OF CHESTNUT AND EIGHTH STREETS,
PHILADELPHIA.

1880.

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FROM THE N. Y. EVENING TELEGRAM, FEBRUARY 8, 1880.

THE PHILADELPHIA TIMES.

One day in the winter of 1874, as Colonel Alexander C. McClure sat in his law office on Sixth street, in Philadelphia, Mr. Frank McLaughlin walked in with that brisk step which marks the man who has a proposition to make rather than one who seeks, with fear and trembling, to be furnished with the red tape of the litigant. The two gentlemen had but slight acquaintance with each other. The one was known throughout the country as a man skilled in state craft, and the other was prominent in Philadelphia as the head of a long-established firm of book printers—a business man of large experience and unimpeachable standing. Mr. McLaughlin, always direct and to the point, formulated the hundred and one street rumors, the burden of which was that Colonel McClure proposed to give Philadelphia a new daily journal, and asked the veteran campaigner if such reports were true.

“Yes,” said Colonel McClure, “I was thinking something about it.”

"If you make it such a paper as Philadelphia wants and such as I think Philadelphia will support, I wouldn't mind joining you in the enterprise," said Mr. McLaughlin.

"What kind of paper is that?" asked the Colonel.

"A newspaper entirely independent in politics, and one that will depend on its own merits for support rather than on the crumbs of politics and the favor of corporations," was the reply.

"That is my idea," said Colonel McClure; "but in what shape do you think such a paper as the one proposed should appear?"

"Compactly, like this," replied the publisher, laying his hand on a copy of the New York *Tribune's* four-page supplement, which happened to be spread upon the table.

Colonel McClure nodded his assent, and from that moment THE TIMES had its positive inception. Thus the right men met, and thus the man of affairs secured an unequalled pilot for the managerial rocks and shoals of journalism. When, on the 13th of March, 1875, after the great business panic, and in the midst of the general depression, the first number of THE TIMES appeared, it was received very favorably. A few weeks later its success was pronounced phenomenal. But, in reality, THE TIMES, always brilliant in its successes, is not and was never phenomenal. Its birth was a necessity for Philadelphia; its growth has been most natural, and in accordance with the laws which

govern a healthful agent. One of Colonel McClure's favorite aphorisms is that "a newspaper must have a purpose." He has said frequently, "There must be a public want for the newspaper, and the want must be of such breadth as to give that newspaper complete support." It needs but a glance at the condition of the newspapers in Philadelphia before the advent of THE TIMES to understand why it took root and thrived. There was hardly an independent paper in the city. A half-million readers were treated daily to a budget of associated press news, State miscellany and editorial common places mixed as in a compost. The *Ledger* had built itself up almost without opposition, and had grown with the growth of the city, but had become neutral on all subjects of great political importance. The gradual increase of official patronage had so strongly chained the party journals that independence was almost unknown. Ring power had hold of them, and, indeed, seemingly of everything, even public opinion. The Mayoralty fight of 1874, when Colonel McClure ran against W. S. Stokley—the most exciting contest ever known in Philadelphia—opened the way for an independent journal. When the strong efforts to reform the affairs of the city had been defeated, the despotism of power was greater than ever. There was no avenue in which the people could have independent criticism, for the direct support or sleepy connivance of existing organs kept

the people blinded as to the rottenness of their servant. With such surroundings THE TIMES was set afloat, avowedly: "As a thoroughly independent journal, confessing allegiance to its own convictions, making no hollow pretense of neutrality on the leading questions of the day, or in political conflicts as they pass."

INTERESTING PECUNIARY DATA.

When THE TIMES was started, in order to obtain admission into the Associated Press it paid \$35,000 for the franchise of the *Age*, a moribund Democratic organ of small circulation and no particular value as a newspaper. A cash capital of \$100,000 was paid in, with the expectation that the paper would sink \$1000 a week for the first year. When it was passed a paying basis might be established. During the first three months the capital was drawn upon to the extent of \$12,000. After that there never was any draft upon that fund for ordinary expenses. Before the expiration of nine months the profits had made the first draft good, and the year closed with a handsome profit on its business. From the day THE TIMES was started it has never issued a note and never had a bill unpaid after maturity, or borrowed a dollar of money in its business. The reserve fund was invested in real estate, and the lot at the corner of Chestnut and Eighth streets—the most central

eration—was bought for \$145,000. During the summer 1876 *THE TIMES* building was erected on the chosen site at a cost, as it stands on the company's books, of \$225,000. This most attractive structure—a model of convenience—a representative Philadelphia building, of rich, red Philadelphia brick, deepened by the dark mortar in which it is laid, being surmounted at a height of 114 feet by an octagonal clock tower. The company has expended \$90,000 in putting in the very best machinery the world can produce, and has one of the most complete press rooms in the United States. As a part of its equipment there are two web perfecting presses, which turn out 1000 copies of *THE TIMES* a minute without being touched by hand, the papers coming from the press folded and ready for delivery. Every other improved article that can be put to use about a first-class newspaper office may be seen in the building. The employes of the company are given every accommodation—there is plenty of room to work, and yet such was the economic forethought in the erection of the building that the rents from it, exclusive of the room occupied by *THE TIMES*, pay the interest on the investment. Though it had started without a list of subscribers, *THE TIMES*, within a year, circulated, with a single exception, more than all the other morning newspapers of Philadelphia combined. Such skill in suggestiveness and such original thought were put into the makeup of *THE TIMES* that its typographical

features were soon acknowledged as without a superior. In March, 1877, the management, having long felt the need of extending the influence of THE TIMES to very distant readers, issued the first number of the WEEKLY TIMES double the size of the daily. A strong introduction was desirable, and so, by one of those strokes in journalism well worthy of him, Colonel McClure decided that the first page of the Weekly should be devoted to the fugitive and rapidly disappearing but most valuable records of the great war. "The Annals of the War," written by leading participants in both armies, at once gave national prominence to the Weekly, and have since been pronounced so valuable, and have been so greatly in demand, that they have been published in a large octavo volume. When another year had passed it was decided to make another new departure in Philadelphia journalism—to publish a Sunday edition of THE TIMES. Such a step was taken against all tradition, which long before had ruled that no reputable newspaper could be published in the Quaker City on Sunday. The Sunday edition, now eagerly sought because of its carefully prepared family reading, as well as for its news, soon became as popular as the regular daily edition. Its special features are prepared with care and skill for the instruction and entertainment of the domestic circle, and it now goes into every home of refinement and taste in Philadelphia, its circulation being even larger than

that of any of the week day editions. The growth of the business of the paper recently made it necessary that a branch office should be established in New York, and "THE PHILADELPHIA TIMES OFFICE," is now a fixture in the metropolis. As an evidence of the popularity of the paper, it may be stated here that more copies of THE TIMES are sold in New York than any New York daily sells in Philadelphia, except the *Herald*.

REASONS FOR ITS SUCCESS.

This uninterrupted prosperity has been due to the fact that THE TIMES never has broken faith with its readers. A paramount idea of its projectors was that if it could not be sustained without official patronage it should not exist. During the five years of its career it has been offered a great deal of official advertising, which it has declined uniformly, so that it might be free to speak its thoughts upon every topic. The wisdom of the reliance upon its merits as an untrammelled newspaper has been shown more than once, but never to such advantage as within the last three years. The continued assaults made upon corrupt administrators of county and city affairs, and the support of the Democratic candidate in 1877 broke down Republican opposition and brought in the new man. This Democratic Sheriff was supported by THE TIMES, which was

offered the patronage of his office, amounting to about \$40,000 a year; but this was promptly declined. Thus, when the Sheriff surrounded himself with many of the most corrupt influences in the Democracy, THE TIMES was free to criticise his operations, and, true to itself, did so fearlessly. The result was the choice at the next election of a Republican Sheriff, supported by THE TIMES, by the largest popular majority ever given for any candidate in Philadelphia. THE TIMES maintains the same policy in regard to State and National topics as marks its course in Municipal politics. It has resolutely criticised all parties and the want of public integrity wherever found. It has been compelled of necessity to antagonize the Republicans, perhaps more than the Democrats, for the reason that the former have been in power in Nation, State and City. In national politics it has made its great battle for the purity of elections. Its denunciation of the frauds in Louisiana and Florida has been unceasing, and it was one of the first journals in the country to make protestation against the perpetrators of the more recent fraud in Maine.

One might conclude from the foregoing outline that this journal of brief but most interesting history has been given over to politics. It is indeed a political newspaper, but overriding all the rules that fix its attitude toward politicians is the first rule that is regarded in the office as a TIMES maxim. This rule is that THE TIMES shall give "all

he news and the truth about the news." In giving all the news it remembers that the world is too busy to hunt for information upon current matters throughout dozens of columns when half as many columns will hold all that is of value. It is to the point when handling the news, and incisive when it comments upon the news. Every item that is taken into the office must be weighed as to its interest. In this way only a dozen lines are sometimes used of a two-column report which appears in full in some of the other papers, while a twelve-line Associated Press dispatch is supplemented by specials, until the twelve lines become twelve hundred. Moreover, news is sought in a legitimate way outside the beaten tracks. The discovery of a new quack, a new trick, and a myriad other new evils to society, is regarded in the light of news, and THE TIMES feels it to be a mission to probe here and expose there. In its war against frauds THE TIMES has brought upon itself no less than twenty libel suits, and all of these suits have been decided in its favor. It has never permitted a libel suit to be compromised or to be settled in any other way than by a verdict of the jury. This originality in treating news, which is as marked as the typographical face of the paper itself, has been achieved by the great care taken by Colonel McClure in the selection of his staff.

THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

To thoroughly understand Colonel McClure as an editor-in-chief it is necessary first to become familiar with the story of his part in politics. His political training is seen every day in his editorial work. One characteristic in which he closely resembles Horace Greeley is that he never forgets a political fact, however small. He has at his tongue's end the majorities in States, districts and counties for a score or more of years. To political instinct is added a remarkable political memory; the two combined make a faculty possessed by not many in the profession. Colonel McClure's office rules and habits are unlike those of most men in his position. He is in his room a great deal of the time during the day, and in the evening whenever important matters call for comment at his hands. He is a hard worker, and his leaders, very rarely upon other topics than those which arise from Government or political affairs, as well as his caustic paragraphs upon minor topics, are sent to the managing editor with great regularity. Of his general editorial supervision, it may be said that while no great editor ever injected more individuality into the columns of his paper, none ever gave his staff a wider latitude. He carefully selects his men, and with the barest possible use of the curb, leaves them free to the details of their work.

WHO MAKE THE TIMES.

The staff is very homogeneous, though the men who compose it, every one young, were drawn from a half-dozen cities. Mr. M. P. Handy and Mr. James H. Lambert are the political lieutenants to the editor-in-chief. Mr. Handy is almost as well known to journalism in many parts of the country as Colonel McClure. Though now but thirty-three years of age he has been a newspaper writer for eighteen years—since as a boy of fifteen he began reportorial work on the Richmond, Va., dailies. His first ten-stroke was the great “beat” in the Virginius case while employed on the New York *Tribune*, on which journal he afterward occupied responsible editorial positions. He has done every kind of work about a newspaper office—has been in turn, and always ascending the scale by his own force of character and sagacity, reporter, exchange reader, paragraph writer, travelling correspondent, Washington correspondent, and for many years writer of some of the most telling leaders that have appeared in THE TIMES. His service in Louisiana during the returning board troubles, and his Washington dispatches have made the initials “M. P. H.” known far and wide. Mr. Lambert has had journalistic experience no less varied. He has been trained to the work from boyhood. Starting with the Wisconsin newspapers, he has been connected as editorial

writer and managing editor with the press of St. Louis, Chicago, New York and the provincial press of Pennsylvania. He left an editorial position on the New York *Sun* to make a study of Pennsylvania politics, and his knowledge of the ins and outs of the State is so thorough as to make him of the greatest utility to THE TIMES. He is the main writer of the column of short, crisp, minion paragraphs, which are a great feature in THE TIMES. The other members of the staff are Mr. Thomas A. Janvier, Mr. C. Cathcart Taylor, Mr. Charles H. Heustis, Mr. George Morgan, Mr. Alfred Taylor, Mr. John L. Hamlin, Mrs. M. P. Handy, and Mrs. Lambert. Mr. Janvier, running as far away from American politics as he can get, lends delightful relief to the editorial page with the leaders and paragraphs upon miscellaneous subjects, frequently of a social or humorous character.

Mr. C. Cathcart Taylor, the city editor, is entirely *en rapport* with the spirit of the editorial direction. His experience has been large, and he is known to all the leading newspaper men of the country as a Washington and general correspondent.

But over and yet among these writers is the head of the staff, Dr. Alfred C. Lambdin, who has been managing editor of THE TIMES since its publication was begun. He was, indeed, one agent in the establishment of the paper, having been identified with the reform element in the

fight against the Municipal Ring whose corrupt acts gave occasion for the birth of the corrective journal. When not thirty years of age, as editor of the *Germantown Chronicle*, he had been aroused to the necessity of giving Philadelphia an honest government, and wrote the first article nominating Colonel McClure as the Reform candidate for Mayor, although the two gentlemen were entire strangers to each other. Dr. Lambdin's untiring devotion to his work has so occupied him that perhaps few managing editors are so little known to the journalists of the country. He is largely to be credited with that literary grace and sparkle which distinguish THE TIMES. THE TIMES has a remarkably large and well-selected corps of special correspondents, at home and abroad. It is represented at London by Howard Paul, at Washington by H. G. Ramsdell, Miss Austine Snead ("Miss Grundy"), and Mrs. E. E. Briggs ("Olivia"), and at New York by Joseph Howard, Jr., John B. Bogart, D. B. Waggener and others. That THE TIMES is one of the soundest, ablest and most reliable journals of the day is due to the wit and wisdom of Colonel McClure and his staff, and that it is one of the few really great properties in American journalism is very largely due to the clear head and steady hand of its publisher.

The Times.

PUBLISHED EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

THE TIMES BUILDING,
PHILADELPHIA.

NEW YORK OFFICE, No. 41 PARK ROW.

Delivered in the City and surrounding Towns for Twelve cents a week. Including the Sunday Paper, (double-sheet,) Fifteen cents per week.

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